

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon March 14 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$11 [members \$8]

Dark Chamber Disclosure **A Projection Performance** **by Sandra Gibson + Luis Recoder**

The New York duo's live projection performances rely on the mechanical and optical apparatus of cinema but nothing so much resembling film—leaving only the play of light and darkness, and the articulation of space and time. Creating sensuous effects that recall the shimmering color lights of early cinema or the mesmeric dance of shadows inside Plato's cave, Gibson + Recoder use celluloid loops, gels, crystals and their own hand gestures to bend, reflect, refract or otherwise manipulate the light beam generated by 35mm film projectors. The result is materially "cinematic," yet also suggestive of something well beyond. Gibson + Recoder have presented performances and installations at the Whitney Museum, Tate Modern, Ballroom Marfa, M HKA in Antwerp, and Serralves in Porto. They are in residence this spring at CalArts and Young Projects Gallery.

In person: Sandra Gibson and Luis Recoder

"Two of the most celebrated practitioners of expanded cinema."

- The Viennale

"For more than two centuries, materialization has described the phenomenon of appearance: the process of something assuming or taking form. In the nineteenth-century, showmen coaxed spirits into materializing before audiences with their phantasmagoria lanterns. Scientific demonstrators pressed the magic (or optical) lantern into the service of lectures on optics that gave concrete form to physical laws (showing how light bends, is made up of different colors, or may be dispersed, etc.). The properties of light materialized in one form only to re-materialize in another. The terms most often used to describe *Dark Chamber Disclosure*—expanded cinema, paracinema, live cinema, projection performance—identify it with a specifically avant-garde or

experimental set of practices, which in the 1960s and 1970s, approached the question *what is cinema* with renewed vigor. One of the ideas that an expanded cinema practice asks us to entertain, and one that Gibson and Recoder make explicit in their own commentary on this work, is that cinema has been a performance, involving the manual operation of a projection apparatus, for much longer than it has been anything else. The most radical implication of this idea, however, is that cinema may not, for all that, be any projected moving image whatsoever.

Every venue in which *Dark Chamber Disclosure* has been performed has been set up for film projection, but not all of them have been an auditorium purpose built for the cinema. If multiplicity and variability are part and parcel of any performance practice, they are structuring principles of this performance. The temporal and formal specificities of audio-visual phenomena is determined in part by decisions made prior to the performance, in part by the environment, and in part through improvisation. The script for projection consists of a series of movements, the precise form of which is also arrived at during the performance. Gibson and Recoder each operate a 35mm film projector. Threaded onto one is an unidentified color movie, and onto the other a film loop that alternates between clear and black frames. In front of each projector are two motorized display units (the only piece of proprietary equipment in this arrangement). On these sit any number of things—glasses, crystals, strips of translucent color plastic—plucked from these artists' "menagerie of crystal objects." This ingenious arrangement of instruments is characterized, above all, by a modesty of means, a principled insistence on the already-to-hand. Gibson and Recoder work with the projectors provided by the theatre, and in consultation with the house projectionist, who builds the found film used in the performance from separate reels. At the start of the performance the artists know only which reel will be first.

The approach of these artists to collaboration and composition is not one that would cede intentionality altogether; script and score to chance. It rejects the formal necessity of making such a choice. At the heart of the critique of drama, widely shared by experimental artists in the 1960s, was a desire for art, which instead of channeling experience in familiar ways would open people up to more self-directed experiences. *Dark Chamber Disclosure* retains an obdurate, formal and material indeterminacy: an obscurity of origins, which is a condition of the sublime."

- From "A Drama of Re-materialization" by Michele Pierson

Artists Statement:

In our installation work, we use projected light to articulate space and time. Film projectors and celluloid are the material base of our constructions in light and shadow, the elemental properties of cinema. These things are deeply imbued with a history of viewership in the dark of the theater. To remove it from darkness is to flood this history and cast a certain illumination upon it. A certain exposure. Light spills in the shifting of film from its native darkness in enclosed chambers (camera obscura) to the uncanny openness and defamiliarized illumination of installation. We are exploring the shift, elaborating the displacement, recasting the light mechanics of a peculiar estrangement of the medium. The art of cinema, yes. But more timely: the becoming cinema of art. That is the coming attraction for us.

Sandra Gibson and **Luis Recoder** stage the scene of film as orphaned object through the temporal labor of moving image installation. Collaborators since 2000, Gibson and Recoder unite the rich traditions of the experimental film, particularly its structuralist and materialist strands, and the multi-modal sensibility of expanded cinema that emerged in the 1960s, in which the moving image was woven into the labile space of performance, sound and audience interaction. Their larger body of work explores this interstice between avant-garde film practice and the incorporation of moving images and time-based media into the museum and art gallery.

Based in New York, Gibson and Recoder have exhibited and performed internationally at the Whitney Museum of American Art, MoMA PS1, Mad. Sq. Art, Performa, Light Industry, The Kitchen, Anthology Film Archives, Microscope Gallery, Brooklyn Bridge Park, Hallwalls, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, REDCAT, Ballroom Marfa, Robischon Gallery, Sundance Film Festival, CATE, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Sagamore, Toronto International Film Festival, Images Festival, BFI London Film Festival, Tate Modern, Barbican Art Gallery, ICA, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Viennale, Austrian Film Museum, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, HMKV, RIXC, 25FPS, Courtisane, M HKA, STUK, BOZAR, TENT, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Reina Sofia, La Casa Encendida, CCCB, Museu do Chiado, Serralves Foundation, Solar Galeria de Arte Cinemática, Careof/Viafarini DOCVA, Atelier Impopulaire, Morra Foundation, Nam June Paik Art Center, Yokohama Museum of Art, and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art.

Gibson + Recoder are represented by Robischon Gallery